

Twentieth Century Design Icons
no. 4

"Model 3107 Chair"

by

Arne Jacobsen

(1902-1971)



THE MODEL 3107 CHAIR is one of the most popular chairs in Danish design history. It was designed by Arne Jacobsen, using a new technique in which plywood could be bent in two dimensions, as one of his Series 7 designs which won the Grand Prix at the Milan Triennale in 1957. It has been produced exclusively by Fritz Hansen A/S ever since its invention in 1955, but is also said to be the most copied chair in the world.

Being a "copy" itself contributes some irony to that fact. The chair, along with the Jacobsen's Ant chair, was, according to Jacobsen himself, inspired by a chair made by the husband and wife design team of Charles and Ray Eames.

In its original incarnation, the model 3107 was formed from single piece of moulded, veneered plywood supported on four chrome-plated, tubular steel legs. The chair now comes with a variety of different undercarriges – the original four-legged chair, an office-chair with five wheels, and as a barstool. It comes with armrests, a writing-table attached, and different forms of upholstery. To some extent, these additions mar the simple aesthetics of the chair, while contributing with some practical elements.

The chair is widely believed to have been used in Lewis Morley's iconic nude photograph of Christine Keeler. However, the chair on which Keeler sat in the celebrated portrait session – now in London's Victoria and Albert Museum – is actually a 'knock-off', or imitation, of the classic Arne Jacobsen model 3107 chair. Photographer Lewis Morley had bought half a dozen of them in a sale at Heal's for five shillings apiece in 1960.

